

**Public Policy Committee**  
Montgomery County Commission on Aging

Notes of the meeting  
September 8, 2011

Attendees: Bob Tiller (chairing), Jack Sprague, Rudy Oswald, Leslie Marks, Barbara Mulitz, Chuck Kauffman, Mort Davis, Paul DelPonte, Sarah Gotbaum, and Sara Morningstar.

**1. Federal issues**

Our speaker was Sara Morningstar, Federal Relations Coordinator for Montgomery County government. She described the current situation in Congress, especially with respect to spending and the budget. She emphasized that for people like us to have an impact on our members of Congress, we must be in constant communication, not just once or twice a year, and we must cite specific examples of people who are affected by federal programs.

Paul DelPonte circulated a draft letter to Rep. Chris Van Hollen, who is a member of the Congressional "Super Committee." Our committee agreed that his draft is a good start, but it needs to include some specifics about the impact of federal programs and potential funding cuts on Montgomery County seniors -- perhaps such programs as housing or LIHEAP or nutrition. Sara Morningstar will gather some data and examples for possible inclusion in the letter; Bob will ask Odile Saddi and Jay Kenney if they can also provide materials for the letter. With these changes, the committee recommends that Elaine Binder sign and send it. Paul will work on a revised draft and get it to Elaine within a few days.

**2. Summer study on housing**

Leslie Marks gave a brief report on the summer study on housing, which she chaired. The study revolved around two major issues:

- Accessory apartments, including expediting zoning code changes for them
- "Visitability" and "design for life"

**3. Financial exploitation of seniors**

Barbara Mulitz gave a brief report on a meeting that she and John Honig had last month on elder financial abuse with Robert Hill and Deborah Zuckerman of the State's Attorney's Office. Since John is ill and unable to attend this meeting, we only heard her report and did not discuss that earlier meeting or the many components of the issue. We will put the topic on the agenda for our next committee meeting and hope that John can attend that meeting. Chuck and Mort volunteered to work with Barbara and John on this issue.

**4. Identifying priorities for Elaine Binder's testimony to County Council's HHS committee**

The committee discussed various possibilities for Elaine to describe as priorities of the Commission on Aging, and recommended two: (a) maintaining and improving transportation options and services for seniors, and (b) protecting tenants against unscrupulous landlords and against excessive rent increases.

## **5. Proposed breakfast with County Council members**

The proposed breakfast will not occur, due to concerns about whether it is appropriate for this commission to hold such an event when other commissions do not do so. County Council members, via the Council Committees' structure, will be happy to hear from the COA about issues the COA wishes to discuss, such as recommendations from the COA Summer Study process.

## **6. Breakfast with state legislators**

This is an important annual event. The date and place have been set – November 30 at Holiday Park Senior Center. The committee hopes that all members of the Commission on Aging will participate. Jack will take the lead on arrangements, and he will work with Elaine on getting invitations to all delegates and senators.

## **7. The future of this committee**

Jack led a discussion about whether or not there is a need for this committee. Should the commission continue to have a Public Policy Committee, or would it make sense to fold public policy work into every committee? Every person present said that the commission should definitely continue to have a Public Policy Committee.

## **8. Meeting with Rollin Stanley**

Bob announced that a small group will meet next week with Rollin Stanley, director of the Montgomery County Planning Department. Those attending the meeting will be Elaine, Jack, Bob and Leslie, and the primary topic will be issues related to development along the Purple Line, especially affordable senior housing.

## **9. Next meeting**

The committee decided that it would not set a meeting date for October. Bob will be out of town for much of the month. Other committee members are unavailable on the second Thursday, the usual meeting day for the committee. Jack will call a meeting if he or Elaine thinks that one is needed.

Bob Tiller